

# Natural Resources Committee

## DRAFT Minutes

*July 30, 2013*

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**Committee Members:** Peter Grant, David Hamilton, Andrea Ochs (Chair), Ed Payne, Mark Pumiglia, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright

**Present:** Peter Grant, Ed Payne, Mark Pumiglia, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright

**Staff:** Kevin Behm

**Guest:**

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Since Andrea was not in attendance, Kevin called the committee to order at 7:05.

The Committee first reviewed the status of the Phase II pipeline route. Kevin provided the last VT Gas route planning presentation dated April 5, 2013. Paul Wagner noted that he had a revised route thru Shoreham dated June 11, 2013. As an affected landowner, he is concerned that the routes discussed at the planning meetings are not representative of the final proposed corridor. He feels this proposal should have been discussed at the route planning meetings. At a Shoreham meeting he attended it was suggested that all the affected landowners pool together and hire one attorney with an extensive utility background to represent them. He strongly favored this idea since it would save landowners money and provide them the best representation. The other committee members agreed.

Kevin noted that the draft MOU with VT Gas had been passed-out at the July Commission meeting and delegates were asked to provide edits or comments to the Executive Board. He reported that the final MOU was nearly identical to the draft with only minor grammatical changes. He further described that many of the recommendations from the NRC committee did make it into the MOU, however not all did. The E-Board decided not to go to the expense of hiring expert witnesses to address some of the resource issues when the Agency of Natural Resources had professionals on staff that would be reviewing the application.

The volatility of the price of natural gas was discussed with the likelihood that it will not stay inexpensive forever. Kevin pointed-out that typically over 50% of electric generation in New England comes from natural gas and in winter months there will be competition between heating and electric generation that will likely drive prices up. He demonstrated an iPhone app from ISO New England that displays the fuel mix proportions for electric generation throughout the day. The application is also available online at <http://isoexpress.iso-ne.com/>

The Committee had previously been briefed on the possibility of the Commission receiving additional grant funding to undertake more outreach on the results of last year's Forest Stewardship project. In particular, the effort by a Middlebury College intern to identify town plan and zoning language that demonstrated 'best practices' in addressing forest policies that encouraged responsible forest land use. ACRPC will also help the

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state in developing an online web application that identifies parcels in the 'current use' program, important forest blocks and significant wildlife habitat. He is hoping to work with Claire Tebbs, ACRPC town planner, as she assists towns currently working on updating their town plans or zoning bylaws. Most members felt that encouraging a resource based economy would help to limit the land lost to development, but they were cautious about any potential regulation of property. Kevin will keep the committee updated as the project moves forward.

Members asked that review of the 'Recommended Action's' in the final few Natural Resource chapters be tabled until the next meeting.

The Committee adjourned at 8:50.